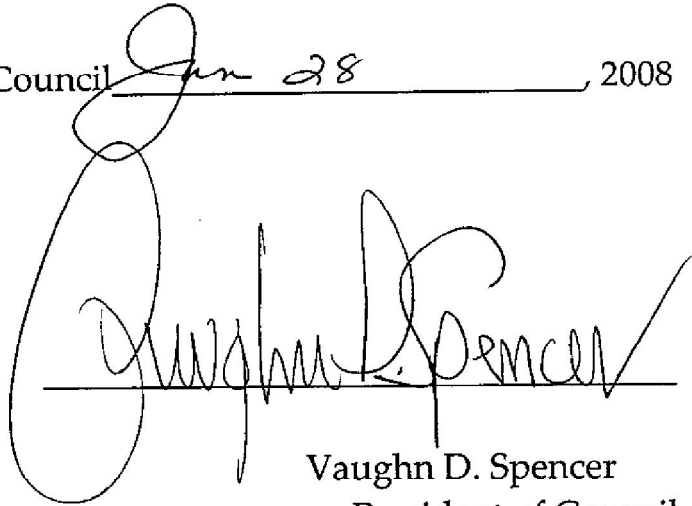


RESOLUTION NO. 13-2008

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF READING HEREBY RESOLVES  
AS FOLLOWS:

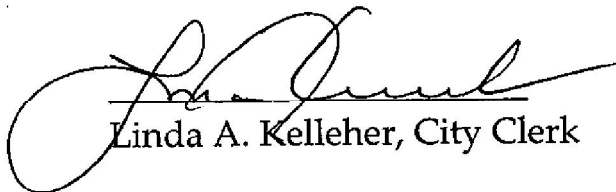
Approving the appeal on the Certificate of Appropriateness,  
as attached in the findings of fact, for the demolition of 713,  
715 and 717 Laurel Street, owner/applicant Berks County  
Community Development Office.

Adopted by Council Jan 28, 2008



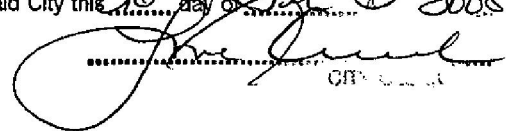
Vaughn D. Spencer  
President of Council

Attest:



Linda A. Kelleher, City Clerk

I, LINDA A. KELLEHER, City Clerk of the City  
of Reading, Pa., do hereby certify, that the fore-  
going is a true and correct copy of the original  
Resolution passed by the Council of the City of  
Reading, on the 28 day of Jan  
A. D. 2008. Witness my hand and seal of the  
said City this 26 day of Jan, 2008



CITY OF READING

## **Appeal of Historic Architectural Review Board Certificate of Appropriateness**

IN THE MATTER OF	§	BEFORE THE
	§	
BERKS COUNTY	§	CITY OF READING
	§	
OFFICE OF COMMUNITY	§	CITY COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT	§	
713, 715, 717 LAUREL STREET	§	

### **FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW, ORDER, AND AGREED RESOLUTION**

On Monday, January 14, 2008 the City of Reading City Council (Council) met to hear testimony on the appeal of the decision made by the Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB) on the Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition of properties located at 713, 715 and 717 Laurel Street, located in the Prince Historic District and owned by the Berks County Office of Community Development (Respondent). At their December 18, 2007 meeting, HARB, having only six Board members present experienced a tie vote on this application; therefore the application for demolition was denied. By majority vote the Council determined that there was credible evidence to overturn the decision of HARB and approve the appeal which allows for the demolition of 713, 715 and 717 Laurel Street.

#### **Findings of Fact**

1. The Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB) is an under the City of Reading Codified Ordinances Chapter 4 Part 1 – Historic Districts. The HARB is a board of 7 duly qualified members.
2. The respondent appeared at the December 18, 2007 HARB meeting and requested that the Board issue a Certificate of Appropriateness to allow the demolition of 713, 715 and 717 Laurel Street. The respondent's request was denied by HARB, as three members voted to allow the demolition as they believed the properties were too deteriorated to allow rehabilitation and the three members believed that the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines did not allow for the demolition of these properties. Therefore a tie vote was issued and the application for demolition was denied.

3. The respondent requested an appeal hearing before City Council the week of December 24, 2007 and was provided with the hearing date during that same telephone call by the City Clerk.
4. City Council took testimony from the respondent and the Historic Preservation Specialist at the hearing held on Monday, January 14, 2008
5. The respondent expressed the belief that the properties are too deteriorated to make rehabilitation an economically viable solution. He explained that two other deteriorated properties in this block have already been demolished. He explained that United Corrstacks has expressed interested in using these vacated lots for off-street parking.
6. Mr. Art McLaughlin, mill manager of United Corrstacks, stated that the plant identified the deteriorated condition of these properties in FY 2000 due to the severe blight they place on this area. He explained that the deteriorated condition of these properties has negatively affected United Corrstacks business and is a detriment to the health and well being of the neighborhood.
7. Historic Preservation Specialist Amy Johnson stated that although the City objected these properties were included in the Prince District by the State as they have first floors that are sunken or below ground level. She further explained the historic rating system, whereby a larger numerical rating signifies that the building is historically prominent. These properties are rated as follows: 713 Laurel has a rating of 8 and 715 and 717 Laurel have a rating of 72. These ratings were assigned in the mid 1970's when the state and city planning bureau assessed all city buildings. These ratings show that these buildings are not significant. For comparison, the Reading Public Library has one of the highest ratings in the City, a 178.
8. Historic Preservation Specialist Amy Johnson stated that she and Mr. Pick toured the properties. The properties were stripped of any special architectural features. The rear portion of the properties is extremely deteriorated and the front portion has been subject to extreme vandalism.
9. Peter Delinko, a resident of the 600 block of S 10<sup>th</sup> Street, offered testimony in support of the demolition. He stated that the condition of these properties presents a public health and safety threat to the community. He noted that these insecure and deteriorated properties are havens for illegal endeavors. He asked Council to support the request for demolition.
10. Exhibits 1, 2 and 3 were entered. Exhibit 1 and 3 demonstrates the condition of the property in the 1970s and current and Exhibit 2 is the minutes from the December HARB Meeting

### **Conclusions of Law**

City Council, after considering all testimony and reviewing all Exhibits, believes the testimony and photographs offered show that the properties are beyond rehabilitation, present a health ad safety threat to this neighborhood.

**Order and Agreed Resolution**

The City of Reading City Council hereby approves the appeal to the Certificate of Appropriateness, overturning the decision of the Historical Architectural Review Board allowing for the demolition of 713, 715 and 717 Laurel Street by the Berks Council Office of Community Development.

**Right to Appeal**

If you disagree with the decision of City Council you may file an appeal with the Court of Common Pleas of Berks County within 30 days after notice of the decision has been made. Your failure to file the appeal within such 30 days shall preclude an appeal from such decision.